

EXTERNAL

AI Index: ASA 28/11/96

9 August 1996

Further information on UA 127/96 (ASA 28/08/96, 22 May 1996) and follow-up (ASA 28/10/96, 28 June 1996) - Legal concern / Possible prolonged detention without trial / Possible prisoners of conscience

MALAYSIAN
Nasiruddin bin Ali, 37
Fakharuddin Ar-Razi bin Abdullah, 30
Pahrol bin Mohd Juoi, 36
Jaafar Ahmad, 29
Mohd Nizamuddin Ashaari, 33
Hashim Ahmad, 42
Hasyim Jaafar, 40
Ahmad Salim Omar, 49
Hashim Muhamad, 30

(Please note new spellings)

Amnesty International has learned that the nine men named above, who are all former members of the banned *Al Arqam* Islamic sect, have been ordered to be detained without trial for two years under the Internal Security Act (ISA) for "acting in a manner prejudicial to the security of Malaysia". Under the terms of the ISA the Minister of Home Affairs may renew the detention orders indefinitely without any reference to the courts. All of the above, who were arrested with nine others in May and June 1996, are being held at Kamunting Detention Centre, Taiping in the state of Perak.

Three others from the group of 18 arrested - Ibrahim Muhammad, Sabri Abdul Rani and Khatijah Aam, the wife of the sect's former leader - are reported to have been released after 60 days in detention and have been placed under restricted residence orders. Amnesty International believes that the remaining six detainees (see previous update) are still in detention waiting to hear whether they too will be held without trial for two years or more.

Amnesty International is concerned by a report in the *Star* newspaper that relatives of one of the detainees, a university lecturer, have not been allowed to visit him in detention. Amnesty International has no other information about the conditions in which the detainees are being held.

Datuk Dr Abdul Hamid Othman, a Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, has said that the detentions were necessary to remove "hard-core" members of the movement from society and help efforts to curb "deviant" teachings.

Amnesty International remains concerned that the detainees are being held for the peaceful expression of their religious beliefs.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English, Bahasa Malaysia or in your own language:

- expressing concern that former members of *Al Arqam* have been ordered to be detained without charge or trial for two years;
- urging that they be charged with recognizable criminal offences or immediately and unconditionally released;
- seeking assurances that the detainees are being treated humanely and have regular access to relatives, lawyers of their choice, and medical treatment as necessary;
- urging the government to allow all former *Al Arqam* members their right to peacefully practice their chosen religion free from the threat of arrest and imprisonment;

- calling for a review of the Internal Security Act so that the rights of the individual and the rights of the community can be balanced through courts of law and not through Executive action.

APPEALS TO:

Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs

Dato' Seri Dr Mahathir bin Mohamad

Prime Minister's Department

Jalan Dato' Onn

50502 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Faxes: +603 298 4172

Telegrams: Prime Minister Mahathir, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

COPIES TO:

Deputy Minister of Home Affairs

Datuk Megat Junid Megat Ayub

Jalan Dato' Onn

50502 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Faxes: +60 3 230 1051

and to diplomatic representatives of Malaysia accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 20 September 1996.